

COLUMBIA RIVER REGIONAL FORUM

TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT TEAM

CONFERENCE CALL

July 20, 2005

FACILITATOR'S SUMMARY NOTES ON FUTURE ACTIONS

Facilitator: Donna Silverberg

Notes: Robin Harkless

The following notes are a summary of issues that are intended to point out future actions or issues that may need further discussion at upcoming meetings. These notes are not intended to be the “record” of the meeting, only a reminder for TMT members.

Grand Coulee Operations

The action agencies are currently operating to stay above 1285' by the end of July; the current elevation at Grand Coulee is 1287.6'. From a discussion at FPAC, the salmon managers recommend doing what is possible to meet the 200 kcfs BiOp flow targets at McNary and reach 1285' at Grand Coulee by the end of the month. Between July 15th and today, flows at McNary receded from 250 kcfs to 170 kcfs. The salmon managers recommended that, over the next week, the action agencies work to keep flows higher this week and avoid any dramatic drops in flows to support in-river migrating fish. The action agencies appreciated this guidance and offered that outflows will not likely fluctuate much; this was acceptable to the salmon managers.

Libby Summer Operations

Montana SOR: Jim Litchfield, MT, reported that discussions are on-going in the region on whether or not to implement Montana's SOR this year.

Questions:

- What is the possibility of the COE working with Canada to get water through Kootenai Lake this year? Cindy Henriksen responded that the COE is currently discussing this possibility with Canada, who is aware of Montana's request and is looking at how there could be a mutual benefit, as well as considering alternatives. If the region agrees to the Montana proposal, there will be more active discussions on this issue.
- Could additional water be taken out of Grand Coulee in August and then backfill the volume in September with Libby? The BOR has a draft limit and is not willing to exceed the limit; also Montana does not want to impact Grand Coulee with the proposed operation.

TMT members offered responses to the Montana request:

- Washington—Discussions are happening at a higher level than the TMT representative, so nothing more to add at this time.
- Idaho – Has heard nothing new since July 6; no new technical information or input.
- Oregon – Neutral on the SOR.

- USFWS – Not supportive of the SOR from a technical standpoint – still supports the USFWS/CRITFC SOR.
- NOAA – Will support ONLY if all parties agree.
- CRITFC – Does not support the Montana SOR.
- Montana – Disappointed, with all work with the Council and others, that this could not be resolved at the technical level.

Alternative Operational Scenarios: Given the lack of consensus on the SOR's, the COE offered alternative operations for the group to consider. Libby is currently still releasing full powerhouse of 24 kcfs. Given an expected low of 6-7 kcfs out in September, the COE ran two scenarios to shape the flow that would support habitat conditions. Greg Hoffman, COE, said that the main difference between options #1 and #2 is that there is a more gradual ramp-down with option #1. The ramp-down scenarios for August were set up to address local issues such as the Kootenai Tribe's ongoing nutrient study and local river use-ability. Both scenarios fall within the parameters of the BiOp operation. Greg suggested that, next to the Montana proposal, case #1 would be the best operation to support local biological needs.

A question was asked about whether spill could be implemented to flatten ramp rates even further. Greg responded that, because there are no restrictions on hourly ramp rates, a more gradual ramp down could occur without spill. The chosen ramp rates come from the WMP and were coordinated with USFWS, Montana and the COE.

TMT members commented on the two scenarios, which are linked to today's TMT agenda:

- USFWS – Case #1 is acceptable; it meets the end of August elevation target and an early higher draft is positive.
- Oregon—Case #1 appears to be consistent with the BiOp and is a good back-up choice for Montana and the BOR.
- Idaho – Supports an operation that would be best for the nutrient study and allows obligations through the BiOp litigation to be met, which would be case #1.
- Washington – There is not much difference between the two options, so supports #1 as it gets closer to meeting Montana's needs.
- NOAA – Case #1 is preferred, as there is less disparity in the full ramp down.
- CRITFC – Case #1 is acceptable, with a more gradual ramp-down rate.
- BPA/BOR/COE – Case #1 is acceptable. The COE added that this scenario sets up an operation that would allow implementation of the Montana SOR if an agreement were reached. The COE is poised to ramp down to 19.1 kcfs to allow completion of USGS study work in the next week; then will ramp down to ~14 kcfs. The COE will continue to update the graphs with new and current data, which will likely change the flow numbers slightly, but not the overall conceptual operation.
- Nez Perce – Case #1 is acceptable.
- Montana – Supports the Montana SOR. As a fall-back operation, prefers case #1 over case #2.

With no consensus at TMT, the issue of whether to implement the Montana SOR was elevated to IT for a policy discussion. A question was raised about whether all the technical information had been distributed supporting the Montana SOR. Most TMT members agreed, as they did at a previous TMT meeting, that the issue this year is a policy call, given this year's BiOp litigation and resulting court-ordered spill. IT planned to hold a conference call at 9:30 on July 21 to discuss the Montana SOR.

Dworshak Water Temperature/Operations

Last week, the action agencies operated Dworshak at 12 kcfs outflow at 43-45°. The COE expressed appreciation for the salmon managers' efforts in reaching a consensus on the recommended operation. Dworshak was currently at elevation 1586' and drafting. The tailwater temperature at Lower Granite remained just below 67° with the operation. As next steps, the salmon managers recommended continuing with the current operation, with the caveat that 67.5° for a 24-hour period is the threshold to trigger increasing flows to 14 kcfs (rather than decreasing temperatures below 43°). Use the colder water only if needed – and be mindful of the affect on hatchery fish.

Howard Birch, USFWS, asked how long the temperatures were expected to be held at 43-45°? From the hatchery perspective, any temperature below 45° is a concern for the fish, especially if for longer than one-two weeks. Kyle Martin, CRITFC, commented that it appeared that a ramp down from 12 kcfs after one more week would suffice in keeping the temperatures at Lower Granite down.

Dave Statler, Nez Perce Tribe, recommended that TMT closely track the amount of water being used now, to avoid dropping below 10 kcfs in late August in order to address temperature issues then. Russ Kiefer, Idaho, agreed with the need to consider late August migrants, which historically have high adult return rates. For this, and in consideration of hatchery temperature needs, he suggested that if the temperatures are enough below the 67.5° threshold at Lower Granite, instead of operating at 12 kcfs and 43° for another week, decrease the flows or increase temperatures sooner. It was noted that historically temperatures go above the threshold temperature during this time, and it would be difficult to reduce temperatures once they go up. Also, it was noted that the temperature at Dworshak reached 43° just two days in the last week, and otherwise was closer to 45°.

ACTION: The COE will prepare a graph of Dworshak forebay elevations and relative temperatures (the raw temperature data is available as a link, item #5, on today's agenda). The salmon managers will continue discussions about alternative operations. For now, the COE will operate to 12 kcfs and 43-45° at Dworshak, and the TMT will re-visit the issue at the July 27 TMT meeting. The group will monitor the water levels to avoid dropping below 10 kcfs in late August.

Summer Operations as a Result of the Court Ruling

Lower Granite is operating an RSW test which will end on July 22nd, followed by spill to the gas cap (and continued use of the RSW as part of the spill pattern). Little Goose is spilling 30% daytime and to the gas cap at night. Lower Monumental is operating one unit and spill to the gas cap. Ice Harbor is alternating between an RSW test and spilling to

the gas cap. When the RSW test ends on July 22nd, the project will spill to the gas cap. McNary is generating 50 kcfs and spill to the gas cap. All information on summer operations, including at other projects, can be found as links to this agenda item.

Feedback on Emergency Protocols

Following Monday's emergency TMT call, the salmon managers provided the action agencies with a draft prioritized emergency protocols list, and are still engaged in discussions to address some disagreement over a final list. The action agencies said the draft list was helpful in moving toward updating the list and clarifying the process. A couple items no longer apply, including eliminating BPA non-firm contracts (BPA no longer holds these contracts) and decreasing firm load. They will update those practice changes. The salmon managers said the need remains to understand/characterize Monday's problem and suggested that the action agencies formalize it in writing.

ACTION: The draft list will be posted to the TMT web page, as will the final list when available. The action agencies will take the updated list, add to it and try to finalize for use as a tool during future emergencies.

August 10 Meeting in Idaho

Russ Kiefer has offered to host the August 10 TMT meeting, as a piggy-back to the redd count training on the South Fork Salmon River. TMT members will check with their agencies and the group will make a decision at the July 29 meeting.

Next Meeting, July 27, 9am-noon

An agenda has been posted to the TMT web page. Agenda items include:

- Fall Chinook Run Forecast
- Treaty Fishing
- Summer Operations as a Result of the Recent Court Ruling
- Operations Review
- August 10 TMT Meeting Check-In

1. Greetings and Introductions.

The July 20 meeting of the Technical Management Team was chaired by Cindy Henriksen and facilitated by Donna Silverberg. The following is a summary (not a verbatim transcript) of the topics discussed and decisions made at that meeting. Anyone with questions or comments about these notes should contact Henriksen at 503/808-3545.

2. Grand Coulee – Shape of Water to Draft to Elevation 1278.

David Wills asked what the projected Grand Coulee elevation is at the end of the month, given the current rate of discharge. As a rule of thumb, we try to manage the project to be at or above elevation 1285 on July 31, Tony Norris replied; the current elevation is 1287.6 Kcfs. Inflows are really starting to drop off,

said John Wellschlager – if the salmon managers have specific flow requests or concerns at McNary or Priest Rapids, now would be a good time to hear them.

We discussed this yesterday, said Wills, and if you could meet 200 Kcfs at McNary, that would be ideal. Obviously we're constrained as to the amount of water we have this year, and if you could draft steadily to achieve elevation 1285 by July 31, that would probably be the best operation at this point. Once flows recede to 150-160 Kcfs, we will be reducing the opening at Bays 3 through 6 at The Dalles from 8 feet to 6 feet, said Henriksen. Flows are definitely receding, she said; will you be developing a methodology to decide what flows you want to see once McNary flows drop below 200 Kcfs? It all depends on what volume is available, Wills replied – we will be looking at current and projected flows and trying to determine the best operation through the summer.

Mainly, I wanted to know what the flow projections are for the next couple of weeks, said Ron Boyce. Do you see inflows dropping off sharply in the immediate future? Flows are receding, Henriksen replied. I'd like to see no dramatic drops in flow right now; we're seeing large numbers of fish in the Lower Columbia, Boyce said. Flows are a lot higher than I expected for this time of year; I would request that there be no dramatic drops in flow over the next week. That makes great sense – that's very helpful, said Norris.

Given that, what flows can we expect to see through next week? Boyce asked – can you maintain 170 Kcfs through next week at McNary? Grand Coulee has been discharging 130-140 Kcfs over the past week, just over inflow, Norris replied; we're drafting at a typical rate for this time of year. The 1285 elevation target is just a rule of thumb; the intent is to save some water for August once inflows really start to dry up. So do you think you can maintain 170 Kcfs at McNary and still hit the 1285 target on July 31? Boyce asked. We'll do our best, Norris replied. That would be fine with NMFS, said Paul Wagner. It seems like a reasonable approach, said Russ Kiefer. Washington has no problem with that, said Cindy LeFleur. Seems like a good approach, added Jim Litchfield.

3. Libby Summer Operation.

Henriksen said while the action agencies are waiting to see whether there have been additional developments on the Montana SORs, we have attached several potential operational scenarios attached to today's agenda. Litchfield said that, while the two scenarios the Corps has modeled are fine as a fallback, they are not ideal, from Montana's perspective.

Discussions on the Montana SOR have been ongoing since last TMT met, said Litchfield. Many parties in Montana have been working hard to try to get the SOR implemented. Our hope is that people will realize that this does not represent a big change in Lower river flows during July and August, and would increase flows in September. Obviously the power emergency we discussed on

Monday could have an impact. Montana continues to support a flat flow that will leave a volume in Libby and Hungry Horse for use in September.

Any update on the negotiations with Canada to pass the water through Kootenai Lake? Bob Heinith asked. We have been discussing this operation with Canada, Henriksen replied; Canada is aware of the SOR and the fact that a pass-through request may be coming their way. Until we have agreement on the SOR, however, there will be no agreement with Canada – it's a chicken-and-egg thing. The next step, in terms of reaching an agreement with Canada, would not involve money – it would typically be an agreement between the US and Canada as to how to shape flow and find mutual benefit in the operation. Canada is considering what they may find beneficial if the SOR is adopted.

One other issue, said Heinith: is there a possibility of getting some extra water out of Grand Coulee in August, and backfill with Libby volumes in September? No, Norris replied – we have a draft limit at Grand Coulee and intend to maintain it. Also, Montana has no desire to transfer the impacts of its requested Libby operation to Grand Coulee, added Litchfield.

Litchfield asked the other TMT parties to state their current positions on the Montana SOR. Is there any chance we're going to get agreement on the SOR? he asked. If not, we can discuss the alternative scenarios. LeFleur said the discussions have been taking place at a higher level than her office; I really haven't been involved, she said. I would ask, however, how different the Montana SOR is from the scenarios that have been modeled, LeFleur said. The Montana SOR would produce a flat flow of about 11.1 Kcfs from this weekend through the end of September, Greg Hoffman replied. In other words, said Henriksen, the current operation does not preclude the implementation of the Montana SOR.

Russ Kiefer said he has heard nothing new since TMT addressed this issue on July 6. We have seen no new technical information, so it's hard for us to change our technical position, he said. Boyce said Oregon continues to be neutral on the Montana SOR. Wills said the Fish and Wildlife Service does not support the SOR. Paul Wagner said NMFS is willing to entertain the Montana SOR, but would not agree to implement it unless all parties agree. Kyle Martin said CRITFC does not support the Montana SOR, and continues to support the original CRITFC/USFWS SOR. That's unfortunate, said Litchfield – the Montana Council members have worked hard to reach agreement this year. I'll check on the status of the higher-level negotiations, and will pass the conversation at today's meeting along as well.

Moving on to the alternative scenarios the Corps has modeled, Henriksen said inflows have been greater than expected. Libby continues to release full powerhouse capacity; the project is at elevation 2456 and drafting. The objective of the scenarios modeled was to slowly ramp down the flow, rather than abruptly dropping it on September 1, to achieve better habitat conditions in September,

she explained. Hoffman said that, while the Montana SOR would produce the maximum biological benefit in Montana, the worst operation would be to release a flat flow through the end of August, followed by an abrupt drop in flow. We have tried to model a more gradual rampdown, to ease some of those biological impacts. We will need to drop from five units to four this weekend, he said, for the GDACS computer insulation effort. The ongoing nutrient study and river usability are also concerns, Hoffman said.

From our perspective, Case 1 would have the softest impact, biologically, said Hoffman. Litchfield said he would prefer Case 1, because of its more gradual stepdown structure, from full powerhouse capacity to 19.2 Kcfs to 14.4 Kcfs to 12 Kcfs to 7 Kcfs. Both Case 1 and Case 2 are hot-linked to today's agenda on the TMT homepage. In response to a question from Heinith, Hoffman said a reduction of 5 Kcfs (one unit) in Libby outflow will result in a drop in river stage of 1.5 feet. Any possibility that spill could be used to feather down some of those ramp-down rates? Heinith asked. It isn't the turbines that are driving the ramp-down rates, said Litchfield – it's the Biological Opinion. Those ramp-down rates were negotiated with the Fish and Wildlife Service for the 2000 BiOp, and are among the most restrictive in the FCRPS, Henriksen added.

In response to a question from Boyce, Henriksen said that, under these two scenarios, the rampdown to 19.2 Kcfs outflow could begin as early as this Friday, July 22.

It sounds, then, as though there is no TMT agreement on the Montana SOR, said Silverberg. The Corps has developed a couple of alternative operational scenarios; it sounds as though Case 1 would be preferable to most of the folks at TMT. It also sounds as though the Montana SOR will be elevated to IT tomorrow.

Wills said the Fish and Wildlife Service would prefer Case 1. Boyce said Oregon also supports Case 1. Kiefer said he would like to check with the Kootenai Tribe and with IDFG personnel in northern Idaho as to which scenario would be preferable; it sounds as though both scenarios are consistent with the BiOp, he said. This has been coordinated with those parties, said Hoffman – they support Case 1. In that case, I would support Case 1, Kiefer said. LeFleur said that, given the relatively small difference between the two scenarios, and given the fact that Case 1 seems to meet Montana's needs better, Washington is willing to support it. Wagner said Case 1 is fine with NMFS. Martin said Case 1 would also be acceptable to CRITFC. Dave Statler said the Nez Perce Tribe also supports Case 1. Litchfield said Montana would agree that Case 1 would be preferable to Case 2. Wellschlager said Bonneville is OK with Case 1. Norris said Reclamation agrees. Henriksen said the Corps is poised to implement Case 1, perhaps starting as soon as tomorrow. If the IT goes along with Montana tomorrow, we are also poised to implement the Montana SOR, she added.

Does this mean that the Corps is accepting the CRITFC/USFWS SOR? Heinith asked. I think there is a dispute over the two SORs, and we will be taking that dispute to the IT tomorrow, said Litchfield, adding that, if the IT declines to recommend implementation of the Montana SOR, the two Montana Council members are considering requesting a meeting of the regional executives.

4. Dworshak Water Temperature.

Henriksen said the intent of this agenda item is to provide a weekly check-in on Dworshak operations. Last week, as agreed at TMT, we increased Dworshak outflow to 12 Kcfs and lowered the release temperature to 43 degrees F. The current elevation at Dworshak is about 1586 feet and drafting. We continue to release 12 Kcfs at 43 degrees; the tailwater temperature at Lower Granite has been just below 67 degrees and holding pretty nicely, she said. Is there any desire to change the current Dworshak operation? Henriksen asked.

We discussed Dworshak operations yesterday, Wills said; our recommendation was to continue with the current operation, with the same caveat that if 67.5 degrees is exceeded on a 24-hour rolling average in the Lower Granite tailrace, Dworshak outflow will be increased. Do you know how long the 43-degree outflow temperature will continue? asked Howard Burge.

In response to a question from Kiefer, Burge said there are three steelhead rearing systems at Dworshak National Fish Hatchery; System 1 already has fish in it, and System 2 will have fish soon. System 3 will be used in August. The fish in System 3 will be impacted the most by these low water temperatures. If we see a month at 43 degrees, we will lose about 10 mm of growth, which could cause problems this winter, until we go on reuse (heated water). SARs decrease dramatically for smaller fish, he added. The unclipped steelhead we raise for US v. Oregon are also in System 3, and would be affected, he added. The bottom line is that we can live with 43-degree water for a week or two, but if it goes on for a month, that's really going to impact us, said Burge. We would prefer that the Dworshak release temperature not fall below 45 degrees, unless absolutely necessary.

I guess we'll have to keep an eye on things at Lower Granite, and use the 43-degree water only when absolutely necessary, observed Wagner. Are you planning to reduce Dworshak outflows within a week or so? Statler asked. That's part of what we're discussing today, said Henriksen – we've been running at 43 degrees only for the last two days. If we do see temperature problems, I would prefer to see us maintain higher flows – 12 Kcfs, for the time being – rather than reducing the outflow volume and continuing at 43 degrees, said Wills. Statler requested that the TMT closely monitor the remaining volume in Dworshak to ensure that it is not necessary to reduce Dworshak outflow below 10 Kcfs prior to August 31.

The group devoted a few minutes of discussion to the question of how to balance the need to maintain the current temperature regime and the need to save as much cold water as possible for use later in the summer. Kiefer suggested that the action agencies maintain the 12 Kcfs outflow, but increase the outflow temperature to 45 degrees. Ultimately, it was agreed that the current operation at Dworshak – 12 Kcfs outflow at 43 degrees F – will continue at least until next Wednesday's TMT meeting, unless temperatures in the Lower Granite tailwater exceed 67.5 degrees F. on a 24-hour rolling average.

5. Summer Operations as a Result of Recent Court Ruling.

Henriksen said summer operations continue per the court ruling. RSW testing continues until July 22 at Lower Granite, after which the project will spill total river flow up to the gas cap, with the RSW in the spill pattern, over the 11.5 Kcfs station service minimum. Spill also continues at Little Goose, Lower Monumental, Ice Harbor and McNary. RSW testing at Ice Harbor will also end at 6 am on July 22; after that, Ice Harbor will be spilling to the gas cap. Detailed spill and flow data for each project is available via hot-link from today's agenda on the TMT homepage.

6. Feedback on Emergency Protocols.

Wills said the salmon managers have continued to discuss the protocols; beyond what we submitted to the action agencies following Monday's emergency TMT call, there is nothing to add. We still have some difference of opinion as to what the best approach should be, he said. Henriksen said the salmon managers' list will be posted to the TMT homepage soon. Wellschlager said the action agencies will be working with the salmon managers to tweak the emergency protocol list; for example, BPA no longer does non-firm contracts. Also, the list refers to "reduce firm loads;" that refers to interruptible DSI contracts, which, again, Bonneville no longer enters into, Wellschlager said.

It was agreed that the salmon managers will continue to work to achieve consensus; in the interim, the action agencies will continue to use the current list. Boyce suggested that it would be prudent to revisit Appendix 1 to the Water Management Plan, in order to clarify and update both the appropriate emergency actions and the process by which they are implemented. Henriksen agreed, reiterating that the action agencies will continue to discuss the list provided by the salmon managers on Monday.

Was an emergency declared on Monday? Statler asked. No, Wellschlager replied.

7. Next TMT Meeting Date.

The next face-to-face meeting of the Technical Management Team was set for Wednesday, July 27. Meeting summary prepared by Jeff Kuechle, BPA contractor.

TMT Participant List

July 20, 2005

Name	Affiliation
Cindy Henriksen	COE
John Wellschlager	BPA
Tony Norris	USBR
Nic Lane	BPA
Tim Heizenrater	PPM
Larry Beck	COE
Laura Hamilton	COE
Kyle Martin	CRITFC
Donna Silverberg	Facilitation Team
Ray Gonzales	COE
Cathy Hlebechuk	COE
Paul Wagner	NMFS
Paul Koskie	COE
Todd Cook	PPM
Dan Spear	BPA
Russ Kiefer	IDFG
Barry Espenson	CBB
Jim Litchfield	Montana
Ron Boyce	ODFW
Cindy LeFleur	WDFW
Lance Eilas	PPL
Greg Hoffman	COE

Ruth Burris	PGE
Richelle Beck	D. Rohr & Associates
Lee Corum	PNUCC
Tom Le	PSE
Victoria Watkins	Pyra Energy Group
Howard Burge	USFWS
David Wills	USFWS
Bob Heinith	CRITFC
Dave Statler	NPT